

REMARKS

Claims 18-22 are pending. By this Amendment, claim 18 is amended to be rewritten in independent form, claims 19-22 are amended for dependency, and claims 1-17 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for additional amendments to claim 18 can be found in the specification, for example, at page 14, line 7. No new matter is added.

Applicants appreciate the Office Action's indication that claims 18-22 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph and to include all of the limitations of the base claim. By this Amendment, as discussed below, claim 18 is amended in independent form and responsive to the 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph rejection. Thus, for at least these reasons and those discussed below, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 18 and claims 19-22 depending therefrom are in allowable condition and thus the application is in condition for allowance.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-22 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. The rejection of canceled claims 1-17 is moot. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 18-22.

By this Amendment, Applicants amend claim 18 in response to this rejection, and thus claim 18 and claims 19-22 satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Accordingly, Applicants request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakamura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,157,600) in view of Ohmori et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,182,742) and further in view of Branc et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,831,476). The rejection is moot in view of the cancellation of claims 1-17.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Randi B. Isaacs
Registration No. 56,046

JAO:AXS/rle

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 320850
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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